

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

(Item by Willis E. Bishop
in Bible Study May 6, 1986)

There was a question, "What Bible are you reading from?" I should have clarified that. I'm reading from the King James Version. However, sometimes it doesn't sound like that. The reason is that when we come to some wording which is perhaps a little confusing in the King James Version, I put in some words which will help you to understand it, as nearly to the original Hebrew or Greek as I am able to do.

I am a little uneasy with some of the new, modern translations and paraphrases. I shan't take the time in particular, but I think, at least to my own satisfaction, I can prove my point. If you were to take the Greek New Testament or the Hebrew Old Testament and lay it them beside these new translations and paraphrases, sometimes you would scarcely recognize them, and sometimes the truth is mutilated. Those of us who believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture need to be wary of some of these other translations. I know they are easier to read, but that doesn't mean that you are reading the truth. If I were to recommend to you another Bible, the New King James Version is probably the best choice. I know that there are those on the radio who say it's not good, but I challenge them to prove that. No translation is perfect. It [the New King James] reads like the King James but it has helped in areas where old wording needs to be brought up to date.

Or, if you insist, you might use the New American Standard Bible (NASV). To go beyond that I think you'll have to read with a great deal of care. I'm not telling you what to do -- I'm just saying to be careful if you're reading one of the new translations. If you see a truth in it, make sure you check it to see if it's actually a truth.

There is a New Scofield Reference Bible which has helped some -- it has taken the King James Version and corrected some of the old English words.

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DISCUSSION OF VERSIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS
in connection with the
Study of Daniel - 1997-1998
by Willis E. Bishop

- Q. Is it possible that some of the electronic ministries that are passing out versions of the Bible have had editing done to them so that it supports their particular viewpoint and interpretation?
- A. Yes. I have a Hebrew Old Testament which has a series of footnotes. In other words, they use the main text but in the footnotes they have suggestions about certain manuscripts. For somebody who wants to look for a fault or liberals - for instance, in the New Testament in Matthew chapter 1 where we have the virgin birth of Christ. The liberals choose one manuscript out of 5,000 that reads in a different way and they insert it into the main text because they don't want to accept the virgin birth.

I have decided in my own mind what is dependable, but some don't agree with that of course. Therefore, scholars come to the Scripture with a preconceived notion of the doctrine and they will make adjustments according to a footnote. Sometimes it can be proven that some of the copies that were made were changed according to the doctrine believed by the copiers rather than the pure text. It must be handled with a great deal of care.

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QUESTION RE "COMPUTER'S REVELATION - THE BIBLE DIVINE"
Answered by Willis E. Bishop

Some time ago in the paper, there was an article on Computer's Revelation, the Bible Divine. I happened to notice that and cut my copy out, and the same day that this appeared someone else brought one to class. I'll read the first paragraph and then do a little bit of explaining.

Israeli researchers, using a computer, say they have found encoded messages in the Bible giving new support to the belief that the book's every word is divinely inspired.

Then it goes into discussing some of the encoding that goes on there. Let me give you at least two theories concerning something of this sort.

For example, part of the Hebrew alphabet: aleph, beth, gimel, dah-leth, he -- are used also for numbers. Aleph would be number 1, beth, number 2, number 3, number 4, number 5. There are those who believe that when God inspired the Scriptures, He put into the construction of the Scriptures a numerical structure.

I had in my library Panim's work on numerology. Panim very strongly felt that the Greek New Testament was structured along a numerical lines, and he reconstructed the New Testament entirely on that basis. Then he translated that into English as well.

In an older set of commentaries, Grant's Numerical Bible, which contains not only Scripture but also comments, Grant proceeded along the line that there was a numerical structure in the inspired Word of God. Is there or isn't there? Frankly, I am not sure that there is. I do not deny that God might do this sort of thing -- He certainly could -- but whether He did or not, even conservative scholars differ.

I have, for example, a book on Biblical Numerology by Davis, which takes the other side of the issue. In checking Panim's theory, it seems to me that he is a little bit mechanical and makes some adjustments which do not fit his theory. At least I'm not arguing for a numerical structure to the Scriptures. It may or may not be.

The second item I want to point out, and that's more in line with this particular note in the paper, is that scholars have found certain structures which indicate they believe things in the Scripture which are not normally noticed on the surface.

For example, in the book of Esther -- please turn there with me. You may remember in your study of the book of Esther that the name of God does not appear in the book anywhere. The Septuagint version, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, contains an additional chapter to the book of Esther, and it's almost ridiculous the number of times in that short chapter they have inserted name of God to make up for the fact that the name of God does not occur in the book of Esther, but that's not a part of the Bible.

However, in Esther 5:4 we read: "And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him." In your Hebrew Bible, the words "let the king and Haman come this day" begin with the Hebrew letters "Yodh," "He" [hay], "Waw" [wow], "He" -- and those four Hebrew letters make up the name which stands for "Jehovah" in the Hebrew Old Testament.

Again, in Esther 7:5, the words, "who is he and where is he?" In Exodus 3:14 Moses said, "And whom shall I say sent me?", God said, "I Am that I Am". If you take the above Hebrew words of Esther 7:5 and make an acrostic of the last letters, you'll find that you've spelled out the "I Am" of Exodus 3:14. So Jewish scholars have felt for a long time that though God is not named in the Bible, there is a structure which reveals His name.

Several years ago when Persia, which is now Iran and before it fell to Khoumenie, celebrated, I believe, the 2,500th year of the origin of the nation, they put on a big display, our vice president went over and attended and the Jewish scholars in the United States made quite a bit of it. I visited one of the synagogues in the Washington, D.C. area. They had a Cyrus cylinder, and also a copy of the book of Esther, and in it they had taken these letters and enlarged them so you could see very definitely the name for God stand out in them. The events of the book of Esther of course took place in Persia.

It is this principle that this particular article in the newspaper goes on. You'll find that they have found a number of different things in the hidden structure of the Scripture to indicate things of the future, things relating to Israel, and therefore from that point of view they're arguing for the inspired Word of God.

Whether you hold to that or not will be up to you. I am not so sure I do. I say I'm sure that God could have put that structure in there if He had so chosen, but we have so many clear statements that argue for the inspired Word of God that I'm not sure we need to accept this. But I'm glad to see any testimony on the right side of the fence.

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RE TV PROGRAMS ON HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE
[Ancient Mysteries]
by Willis E. Bishop

If you are a conservative believer, I am sure you have found that not to be satisfactory, or perhaps some believers have been misled by things that are being said on that program. I have seen only part of it.

They do not believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. They suggest that the division between Israel and Judah in forming the two kingdoms was the result of Solomon's dismissing Abiathar from the priesthood rather than the contention between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. They think that Josiah planted or sneaked the copy of the law into the temple so that Hilkiah could find it, completely contrary to the biblical account.

On and on they go, simply destroying the trustworthiness of the historical biblical record. Therefore, from my personal point of view, I sound a note warning concerning that series of programs.

Just to illustrate. There is a word used for God which we commonly refer to as Jehovah. They say that is a "J" source. Another word used for God in the Pentateuch, which is Elohim. They call that the "E" source. They go beyond this with four or five others added on. The point they make is that one fellow wrote who used the name Jehovah, another fellow wrote and used the name Elohim, so that the Pentateuch is not a single authorship of Moses but of a half dozen different people.

If you want to believe the Lord and the Gospel records, Moses wrote the Pentateuch. It is a choice we make. I am concerned about that series of programs and that approach to the biblical, inspired Word of God.

Two names for God. My wife's name is Adele; her name is also Sweetheart. That doesn't mean I have two women - I wouldn't want that. The same is true of God. Your savior and mine is the Lord Jesus Christ - three names for one person. In our concern about a problem we may say, "O God, help me in this situation." We use another name for the Lord Jesus Christ. I see no reason why Moses in writing could not on some occasions use the word Jehovah and sometimes Elohim.

If you watch this program, I trust you will watch it with a great deal of care.

Prayer: Our heavenly Father, we thank You that your Word is yes and amen, that every jot and tittle come from the hands of men who were guided by the Spirit of God to record for us a reliable history. As we turn to the Scriptures this morning, we pray that you will help us. We need help. We thank You for the Holy Spirit and His work. As so we commit these few moments to You, in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

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